

# THE MORNING SUN

Volume 2  
Number 1

TALLAHASSEE, FLA., MONDAY, APRIL 19, 1909.

Five Cents a Copy  
30c for the session

## AMEND THE PRIMARY LAW.

### To Each Member of the Legislature I Am Sending This Letter.

DEAR SIR:—Recent observations of the workings of the present primary law convince me that unless the law is amended, the people of Florida will have to reconcile themselves to the fact that any or all of their public officers are at the disposal of persons, corporations, or combinations, willing as their selfish interests might prompt them, to spend money enough to elect anyone whom they choose to bring out as candidates, and whom they would be willing, contented and pleased to see placed in positions of trust because of the benefit that might accrue to them.

It is an open secret, as you and others who are well informed, and who have seen a practical test of the operation of the primary law know, that money has been used, and can be used, to override the free will of the people in the selection of public officers. You will perhaps concede that all people, thinking unselfishly for the public good, agree that the primary law should be amended so that the use of money in determining the results of elections can be prevented; the only disagreement being as to the best methods to do this, embracing the forms which the amendments should take.

For some weeks past, I have given this matter thoughtful and earnest consideration, and without taking any credit to myself—because anyone who devoted time and thought to the matter could doubtless have done as well if not better—I believe that I have worked out some amendments that will do much to prevent the effective use of money in primary elections in this State.

Knowing of your deep interest in all public questions and particularly because I am cognizant that you have devoted much of your time and a considerable portion of your purse to the perfection of the ballot in this State, I wish to submit these amendments to you as briefly as I can with clearness, and ask that you give me the benefit of your opinion.

In spite of an apparent showing to the contrary (viewing some of the results of recent elections) I believe that the people of this State are now ready for a change in the election law that will make the ballot free and uncontrolled by anything but the will of the people patriotically expressed at the polls. I believe that the public conscience is aroused to a determination to extirpate governmental evils. That this is so, is due to the recent widespread publicity of official corruption and the exposure of the methods used by interested persons to make their servants also the public servants. History has demonstrated the truth of the fact prosperity breeds contentment with things as they are and puts to sleep the public conscience. It is equally proved in history, that poverty begets patriotism, and that the public conscience is quickened into life when private purses are depleted. From all of these things, it seems to me that the next legislature offers the best chance we have had in years to amend the primary law in the interest of the people, and in fairness, decency and honesty.

You will recall that last session, I conducted a People's Lobby in which I endeavored to do, for the benefit of the people, what the corporations were doing for the special interests. I believe that this lobby did some good. I will again conduct the People's Lobby during the entire session, and as I believe that the amendment of the primary law is the most important question that can concern the people in a legislative way, I have determined to devote most of my effort and attention to an attempt to get through proper amendments to this law.

#### AMENDMENTS FOR THE PRIMARY LAW.

1. Remove the poll tax prerequisite for voting in the primaries, and compel the tax collectors to collect this tax the same that they collect their personal taxes.

This amendment will prevent the payment of poll taxes in wholesale lots, thus putting a large number of voters under obligations to those paying them.

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## SALUTATORY.

Beginning today and continuing every day in the week (Monday's excepted) until the Legislature adjourns, this newspaper will be published, by the people of Florida, for the people of Florida.

More than five years ago I began publishing The Sun, for the people of Florida. In the first issue I laid down the proposition that newspapers whose news and editorial columns did not belong to the people—meaning all the people—were not newspapers at all—these coming under the head of goods and chattels.

I thought this, wrote it and said it, when my money was invested in The Sun, and when I was hot-footing on a cold trail, for pay-roll money of Saturdays.

I think it now—and again, through the goodness of God, in whom the Divine principles of TRUTH, WISDOM AND LOVE are personified, and from whom alone impulses that lead men to them, flow, I am again permitted to write it on this page where it will be read, understood and believed.

For this newspaper belongs entirely to the people of Florida. The expenses of its publication are met from a fund made up by the voluntary contributions of the people of Florida.

This fund was turned over to me for this purpose—because in the fullness of their charity, the contributors confided in my humble capacity and limited experiences to use it well, and in the integrity of my purpose to use it ONLY FOR GOOD, in strict conformity with the impulse that prompted them to raise it.

For this I am grateful.

I hope that I will be permitted to show the quality and measure of my gratitude, by the quality and measure of my work.

I do not know the names of the contributors, their number nor the amounts contributed by each. I suspect some or all of ten or a dozen friends, but I cannot tag them. I did not want to know, and would not let them tell me.

Here's how the thing was done:

When the crowds began to gather for the opening of the Legislative session of 1909, those who knew me asked me if I was going to run a daily paper during this session as I did last. My answer to each one was the same.

Having spent a large sum trying to establish The Sun, I had not the money to run a paper any longer.

The day before the Legislature met, two or three friends asked me what it would cost to get out a daily during the session. Being possessed of experience—bought with the hard earned—I answered, fifteen dollars a day for actual expenses.

A little while after this, the same friends asked

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## WILL THE PEERLESS HEED THE CALL

And Meet the Fearless Frank? Florida may be the battle ground for the beginning of the National Democratic Fight for the Nomination in 1912.—The Wailes brothers here—Also Little Peter.—Senatorial courtesy gets a jolt.

"The Wailes Claim" is again about to engage the attention of the Legislature. Hon. Frank Clark, who has been regularly retained to represent the claimants, arrived in Tallahassee early in the week, not, however, for the sole purpose of working on the Wailes claim, as Mr. Clark has troubles of his own just now, and later Col. Wailes, accompanied by his brother, Major Wailes, of Selma, Ala., and Mr. T. M. Fielding, Mr. Clark's law partner, appeared upon the scene. From what can be learned at this time, the sentiment among the legislators is for the passage of the Enabling Act, permitting Col. Wailes to take his claim into the courts, but it seems quite certain that the Legislature will never award to him any greater amount of money than the \$25,000.00 which has been for six years awaiting his acceptance, and this only provided that he does not antagonize members now in favor of the proposed Enabling Act, by unwise lobbying. Under the Act of 1907 legislators may enter what might be termed "quo warranto proceedings" against lobbyists, inquiring what right and for how much consideration they are acting. Col. Wailes and his brother are fond of telling how the one, the Colonel, went into the Union Army at the time of the "late unpleasantness," from the State of Maryland where they were then living, and the other, the major, came to Alabama and enlisted on the Southern side. The Southerner went in a private, returning a Major, and has made his home in Alabama ever since, and the other has lived a large part of his time, since the war, in the South, a good many years in Florida. Seeing the two old men with their arms about each other's shoulders, and recalling the four years of strife and division which separated friends, families, brothers, one is inclined to give thanks for the grace of forgiveness which can be cultivated in the human heart, to blossom into brotherly love.

Returning to the mention of Hon. Frank Clark, perhaps has not occurred to the general public that an apparently harmless little resolution introduced in the House of Representatives of the State of Florida may bring the State into the limelight before all the Nation. As the press of the State has announced, the Hon. William Jennings Bryan has been invited to address the Legislature, and while no subject was assigned to the gentleman for discussion, coming at this particular juncture it is not a far fetched assumption that his address will bear directly upon the Alexander resolution regarding Mr. Clark. Should Mr. Bryan accept the invitation, and politicians here are assuring each other that he will, his speech will be his first political utterance since the election, and there is no doubt that an issue will be made upon general political principles, particularly the tariff. Many Democrats in the East, and a considerable number in the West and South, will be more than ready to take up Mr. Clark's charge of Populism, and press it to a conclusion, thus making clear the way for a new leader for the Democratic party in 1912. It is precisely because such a possibility exists that the matter will assume national importance. Mr. Clark will not remain in Tallahassee awaiting either Mr. Bryan's acceptance or his arrival, for, as the Legislature has simply invited Mr. Bryan to address that body, without naming any subject or in anywise referring to Mr. Clark, he has no right, he says, to assume that Mr. Bryan, if he would accept, will refer to him in his speech to the Legislature. If, however, Mr. Bryan should do so, Mr. Clark will in all probability send him a telegraphic challenge to meet

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